

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Scottsdale City Council approved the updated WestWorld Master Plan in early March 2003. As WestWorld is located on federally owned land administered by the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), the proposed additions and improvements must be analyzed for potential effects on the environment in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Under NEPA, and under the land use agreement between the City of Scottsdale (Scottsdale) and Reclamation, actions by either party can occur only after consideration of the potential effects on the environment including human, natural, and cultural resources. Further, actions should incorporate appropriate measures to ensure that the quality of the environment would not be degraded or unfavorably altered.

1.1 BACKGROUND

WestWorld, formerly Scottsdale Horsemen's Park, is an approximately 270-acre Western-themed facility located in a portion of the Paradise Valley Flood Detention Basin of the Central Arizona Project (CAP) in Maricopa County, Arizona. This Federal land, under the primary jurisdiction of Reclamation, serves to provide floodwater protection for the CAP canal and adjacent communities of Phoenix, Paradise Valley, and Scottsdale.

In 1982, Scottsdale entered into a Cost-Sharing and Land Use Agreement with Reclamation to operate and develop the property for recreation, consistent with Title 28, Federal Water Project Recreation Act of 1965 (Public Law 89-72, as amended). The agreement specifies that the property be under the supervision and control of Scottsdale, which administers the area for outdoor recreational use. Both Scottsdale and Reclamation agreed to share costs for initial development of facilities, as outlined in the agreement; however, further development, which would be subject to Reclamation's approval, would be at Scottsdale's expense unless a supplemental agreement is established. In order to provide funds for facility development, operation, and maintenance, the 1982 agreement allows Scottsdale to assess and collect fees for entrance to developed recreational areas and facility use, in accordance with a mutually agreed-to-fee schedule.

Since 1982, various planning and development activities have taken place at WestWorld. From 1982 through 1988, Scottsdale and commercial operators of the property developed various equestrian-oriented facilities including polo fields, barns, arenas, entry roads, parking lots, office space, a covered "Equidome" arena, a catering building, and various utilities. In 1988, Scottsdale submitted a Conceptual Master Plan for WestWorld to Reclamation for approval. In 1993, Reclamation requested that Scottsdale (1) complete a detailed review and update of the Conceptual Master Plan, and (2) develop a Facility Operation Plan. Reclamation later approved the WestWorld Management and Operation Plan dated July 1995, which provided an outline for the operation, management, and future development of WestWorld. The Management and Operation Plan involved two distinct phases. Phase I considered the existing facilities and the day-to-day operation of WestWorld. Phase II, a Master Plan for future development, conceptually identified facilities and the process required for new development. Reclamation approved the Management and Operation Plan, in concept, with one exception (the "Historic Village"), with the understanding that any facilities not existing at the time of approval would

require a detailed analysis of the individual features and completion of appropriate NEPA compliance.

Through 1996, commercial operators continued to manage WestWorld facilities. However, in January 1997 Scottsdale regained complete operational responsibility for WestWorld with their purchase of fixed assets at the site. With the increased responsibility to maintain and operate WestWorld facilities, Scottsdale developed a Business Plan in 1998 to develop the financial, operational, and strategic focus for the site. This Business Plan, developed by Scottsdale staff and community focus groups, provided a vision for WestWorld as a community equestrian center and special event facility. In addition, the Business Plan recommended improved or new infrastructure or facilities to meet WestWorld's operational, infrastructure, and efficiency needs (e.g., developing a multipurpose building to minimize the need for tents, decreasing turn-around time between events).

In spring 2002, Scottsdale initiated the update of the 1995 Master Plan, requesting that an updated Master Plan include the facilities recommended in the 1998 Business Plan. As part of this update, economic and market analyses were conducted to ensure that the facility improvements and additions listed in the 1998 Business Plan were still relevant, feasible, and economically viable. Subsequent to determining that the facilities could generate sufficient revenues, an updated Master Plan was completed in January 2003, approved by the Scottsdale City Planning Commission on January 28, 2003, and approved by the Scottsdale City Council on March 4, 2003.

As noted above, Reclamation must approve the Master Plan. Any Federal action, such as Reclamation's approval of a Master Plan developed by Scottsdale for WestWorld and the subsequent improvements of the facilities at WestWorld, must comply with NEPA. Under NEPA, Reclamation approval of proposed improvements at WestWorld can occur only after consideration of the potential effects on the environment including human, natural, and cultural resources. Further, actions should incorporate appropriate measures to ensure that the quality of the human and natural environment would not be degraded or unfavorably altered. Consideration of the environment is accomplished through an environmental assessment (EA) process and document. The purpose of an EA is to determine if there is a potential for significant impacts associated with a proposed project and if an environmental impact statement (EIS) should be prepared for the project. This EA explains the current conditions at WestWorld, the proposed changes, and how those changes could affect the environment. In addition, alternatives to the updated Master Plan are considered in the EA, consistent with Reclamation policy for complying with NEPA. The analyses in this EA have been prepared by URS Corporation (URS), and will be used by Reclamation in deciding whether a Finding of No Significant Impact is appropriate and the updated WestWorld Master Plan should be approved, or an EIS should be prepared.

1.2 PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of updating the Master Plan to include improvements and additions to the existing facilities is to:

- Increase recreational and entertainment opportunities on a year-round basis

- Retain existing “Signature Events”¹
- Recover annual operational costs incurred
- Improve infrastructure and operational efficiency (e.g., water and sewer improvements)

Currently, WestWorld’s operational costs exceed the revenues generated from events and activities conducted at its facilities. By improving facilities, WestWorld would be able to retain existing important events (Signature Events) and accommodate more users throughout the year, particularly in the summer months. Additionally, by providing new and/or improved facilities, WestWorld would maintain and increase its ability to attract large and economically important events, thus increasing facility revenues.

1.3 PROJECT LOCATION

WestWorld is located in north Scottsdale, just east of State Route Loop 101 (commonly referred to as Loop 101) and north of the CAP canal between Frank Lloyd Wright Boulevard and Bell Road (Figure 1-1). The area defined in this document as the project area consists of the 270-acre WestWorld property and approximately 73 acres north of the existing WestWorld site. This additional acreage encompasses two parcels of State Trust Land (totaling approximately 68 acres) and one 5-acre parcel of land recently acquired by Scottsdale. These parcels are defined further in Chapter 2.0.

1.4 PUBLIC OUTREACH AND ISSUES IDENTIFIED

Prior to public scoping associated with development of the EA, Scottsdale conducted a number of public involvement activities to gather input from users and the general public on the facilities that should be included in the WestWorld Master Plan Update. A summary of these public outreach efforts is provided below.

1.4.1 User Group Interviews During Master Plan Update

Scottsdale representatives (or the Master Plan Update consultant, URS) met with 18 user groups in June 2002 to identify the needs and preferences of each group. The information asked of each group included the following:

- Number of users and spectators
- Duration and number of events
- Setup and take-down time
- Special requirements for use of facilities

¹ “Signature Events” are major events that have a track record of having been held successfully in Scottsdale for at least 10 years, generate significant economic impact to our area, create national exposure for Scottsdale, and have attendance that exceeds 50,000 (or at least 10 million viewers if televised). The City’s Tourism Development Commission administers this program.

- Positive items (associated with the existing facilities)
- Negative items (associated with the existing facilities)
- Which WestWorld facilities do you use?
- How could the facility be improved to fit your group's needs?

The user group interviews are listed in Table 1-1.

**TABLE 1-1
SUMMARY OF USER GROUP INTERVIEWS
CONDUCTED DURING THE MASTER PLAN UPDATE**

User Group (s)	Number of Users/ Spectators (approximately)	Duration and Number of Events	Comments on Facility Improvements
Fiesta Cluster/Superstition Kennel Club and Scottsdale Dog Fanciers	2,700	5 days	Need power south of polo fields; improve access into polo field; need shade; need 40 ampere recreational vehicle (RV) service; increase parking volume
Sun Country and Arizona National Show/Arizona Quarter Horse Breeders	2,200	2 days- stallion breeders 14 days- Sun Country 5 days- youth show	Improve arena drainage; improve arena footing; improve electrical and public-address (PA) system; improve show offices; improve security lighting at barns; add lighting in Arena #6; cover Arena #3; move Arenas #7 and #8 to east; cover seating and staging areas; need more space and arenas; need equestrian sensitivity training for staff; screen operations from Arena #5; move dump station closer to RV area
Arizona Reigning Horse Association	2,200	Six, 1-day shows One, 2-day show	Need ferrier's arena; need hitching rails; need shade and aesthetic improvements; need leasable office space; redo footing twice a year; improve PA system; exhibit space should be dual purpose/flexible; may use enclosed Equidome and covered warm-up facility in summer
Scottsdale Arabian Horse Show (signature event)	200,000	10 days	Improve electrical, PA, and drainage; better signage for WestWorld; make services more economical; cover as many arenas as possible; more permanent barns (1,000); add exhibit hall close to Equidome; add more vendor space
Saguaro Classic (Arabian horses)	800	6 days	Upgrade electrical east of the Equidome; improve show offices; provide lights in Arena #6; improve footing and arena preparations; add announcer booths with removable panels, air conditioning, and heating; cover an additional arena; provide on-site, lockable storage
AZ Thoroughbred Breeders	2,030	2 days	Add and improve show offices, improve the phone system, improve flexibility for vendors
Festival of the West/Parada del Sol (signature event)	40,000	7 days	Improve traffic flows; need more restrooms; improve irrigation markings in polo field; add lighting in parking areas; add power on south side of polo field; need Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) access into polo field

TABLE 1-1
SUMMARY OF USER GROUP INTERVIEWS
CONDUCTED DURING THE MASTER PLAN UPDATE

User Group (s)	Number of Users/ Spectators (approximately)	Duration and Number of Events	Comments on Facility Improvements
Paso Fino Horse Association	Number not specified.	4 days	Improve off-site and on-site signage; improve facility aesthetics; need more trees/shade and shaded seating areas; improve PA system; need changing rooms with counter space in restrooms; separate show trailer parking from visitor parking; need large horse trailer parking lots; formalize food vendor locations; add a warm-up trail around the facility
North Scottsdale Polo Club	4,200	35 Match Days	Need power hook-ups and PA system; need restrooms near polo field; need to limit driving on turf; do not allow any basin improvements; improve the turf preparation time and maintenance
Miniature Horse Association of Arizona	1,000	3 days	Improve utilities and PA system; need shaded family/picnic/grilling space; need better vendor space; improve ADA access; improve signage
Junior League (Vendor Fair)	5,000	3 days	Need permanent exhibit building; improve drainage; better telephones
Merry-go-round and Carousel/ Desert Horse Show Association	500	5 days	Need more trees; improve PA system; better electrical in Equidome arena; improve scheduling with competing user groups; lower billing rates; add arenas
Good Guy's Hot Rod and Custom Car Show	20,000	3 days	Need permanent exhibit building; more paved parking; better restrooms
Bird's Nest – Phoenix Open	30,000	4 days	Ensure adequate parking
Bike Week	30,000	4-5 days	Add restrooms near polo fields; need power south of fields; need dump station near RV area; improve access road into basin; better coordination/scheduling with equestrian users; might use exhibition hall, outdoor theater, or PA system
Barrett-Jackson Classic Car Auction (signature event)	155,000-165,000	4 days	Add exhibit hall; realign arenas; consider moving the access road; need loading dock
Appaloosa Horse Show/ Arizona Appaloosa Association	300	Four 2-day shows	Move Arenas #7 and #8; add restrooms; add shaded seating areas; add and improve show offices; create buffer between equestrian users and special event users; add extra arena; improve scheduling conflicts
Tennessee Walking Horse Enthusiasts	830	One 3-day show Three, 1-day shows	Improve facility signage; improve arena drainage; upgrade lighting and utilities; need more arenas; provide sloped and shaded areas
Quarter Horse/Cutting and 4-H Horse Shows	Number not specified.	7 days	Add covered arena; a separate arena for cutting only; adjust fence or relocated soil in Arena #8; add a commercial/retail area; paint underside of Equidome white

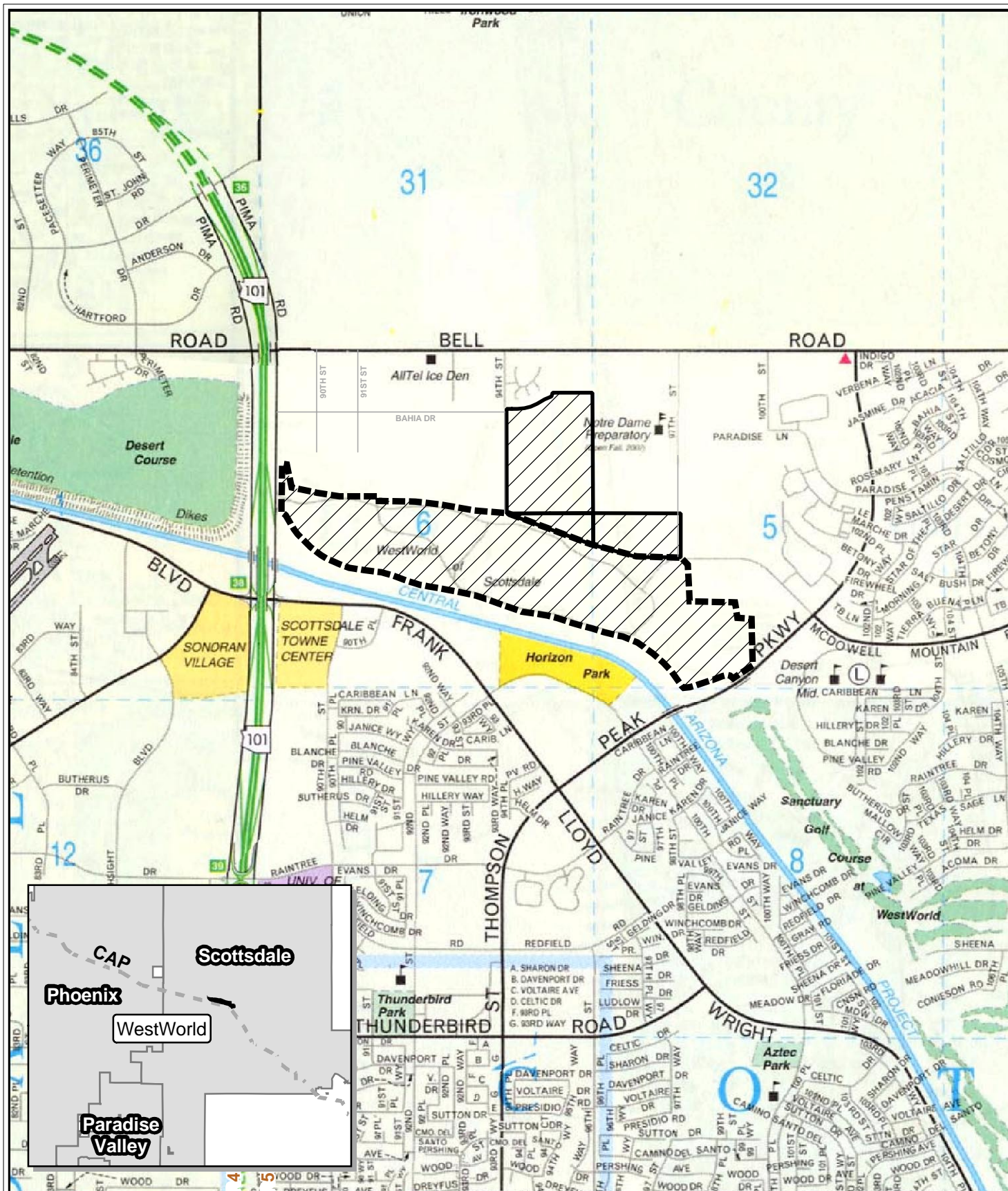
Interviews with user groups consistently identified only a few negatives with the WestWorld facilities, which primarily were the need to improve the electrical system, public announcement system, and internal road/access system. There were several comments on other infrastructure (e.g., restrooms parking), as well as the lighting. The interviews included few comments regarding the need for more permanent facilities, although several groups acknowledged they would use such a facility. The lack of response related to permanent facilities may have resulted because user groups understood that the Master Plan Update would include such facilities as outlined in the 1998 Business Plan.

1.4.2 Public Workshops During Master Plan Update

Scottsdale and URS conducted a series of public workshops on May 7-9, 2002 and open houses on June 12, July 10, September 18, and November 14, 2002. An additional meeting, which was open to the public, was held on September 9, 2002 with the residents of the McDowell Mountain Ranch community. All of the meetings were advertised on Scottsdale's website and through electronic mail (e-mail) to WestWorld user groups and individuals who expressed interest in the project. In addition, three of the meetings were advertised in the newspaper. The May workshops were advertised in the *Scottsdale Tribune* on May 3 and 6, 2002 and in the *Arizona Republic* on May 8, 2002. The June open house was advertised in the *Arizona Republic* on June 12, 2002. The September open house was advertised in the *Arizona Republic* on September 11, 2002. The intent of the workshops and meetings was to explain the WestWorld Master Plan update process and get input from users and the community on future facility improvements. The comments from the workshops were reviewed, summarized, and grouped into the following categories:

- Provide additional landscaping
- Provide more restroom facilities
- Improve telephone system
- Improve lighting and electrical power system
- Allow more/different food vendors
- Facilitate better road access/parking facilitation
- Improve recreational vehicle campsite
- Develop a marketing campaign/better signage
- Purchase land for future growth

The topic of the enclosed multipurpose building also received comments. Comments for and against the multipurpose building were received; several comments in support of the building noted that costs to use facilities should not increase (especially for smaller user groups). It is important to note that whether for or against the multipurpose building, the need to build additional barns and arenas was consistently recognized by all meeting participants.



WESTWORLD EQUESTRIAN AND SPECIAL EVENT CENTER

Location Map

- Existing WestWorld Boundary
- Project Area

Map Produced: 12/19/2003

Source:
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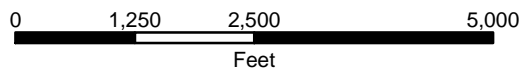


Figure 1-1

1.4.3 Public Scoping

After the Scottsdale City Council approved the Master Plan Update, Reclamation initiated preparation of the EA. The first notice informing the public regarding the intent to prepare an EA appeared in the Scottsdale water bill in the April 2003 edition of the *Scottsdale Pride*, Scottsdale's monthly newsletter that is included with the distribution of water bills. Approximately 95,000 residents and businesses receive this newsletter. The article provided information on the WestWorld Master Plan Update, why an EA is being developed, and contact information to inquire further about the project.

The public scoping period began on April 21, 2003, with the mailing of a scoping notice to over 300 agencies, organizations, and individuals. The notice provided information on what facilities were proposed in the Master Plan Update, why the facilities are being proposed, and why an EA is being developed. The scoping notice also announced that a public scoping meeting would be held on May 13, 2003.

One-page flyers, or door hangers, were distributed to over 6,500 homes, apartments, and businesses in the adjacent area surrounding WestWorld (ranging from about 1 to 3.5 miles away, 6 to 8 days before the May 13 scoping meeting). The door hangers provided information on the proposed improvements and additions to WestWorld, why an EA is being developed, and contact information to inquire further about the project. The door hanger also announced the public scoping meeting.

A paid newspaper advertisement was published in the *Scottsdale Tribune* on Saturday, May 3, 2003; Sunday, May 4, 2003; and Friday, May 9, 2003. The advertisement provided the same information as was included on the door hangers.

A public scoping meeting was held on Tuesday, May 13, 2003, at the Arabian Library in Scottsdale (approximately 2.3 miles from WestWorld). Representatives from Reclamation and Scottsdale were available to answer questions and gather input on issues and concerns that should be addressed in the EA. Thirty-one individuals attended the meeting, representing themselves and/or neighborhood or user groups. The scoping meeting was an open house format, so participants had the opportunity to come and go at their convenience. Though a formal presentation was not conducted, display boards illustrated the proposed improvements associated with the Proposed-Action Alternative, the Modified-Action Alternative, and the No-Action Alternative.

To the extent practicable, oral comments were documented during the meeting; these comments have been summarized in a separate *Scoping Report*, which also documents written comments received during scoping. The *Scoping Report* is available for review at the following offices:

Bureau of Reclamation
Phoenix Area Office
2222 W. Dunlap Avenue
Phoenix, Arizona 85021
Contact: Janice Kjesbo, 602-216-3864

City of Scottsdale
WestWorld
16601 N. Pima Road
Scottsdale, Arizona 85260
Contact: Gloria Storms-Ruiz, 480-312-6807

Based on a preliminary review of the project and the comments received, Reclamation identified the following issues for analysis in the EA:

Natural Resources

- Biological resources
- Earth and water resources and floodplain management
- Air quality

Human Resources

- Land use
- Aesthetics or scenic resources
- Recreational resources
- Socioeconomics
- Transportation and traffic
- Noise

Cultural Resources

- Archaeological and historic resources